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ABSTRACT

A study determined differences in the use of critical listening in constructive and rebuttal speeches during intercollegiate debate tournaments. A self-developed survey instrument was completed by 18 subjects preceding a randomly assigned round at the 15th National Junior Division Debate Tournament. Following completion of the instruments they were returned for later data analysis using the t-test and correlation methods. Critics were found to make key decisions, evaluate faulty reasoning and accept or reject arguments more in rebuttals than in constructive speeches. Several of the survey questions yielded significant differences, but many other findings supported retaining the null hypothesis. In the future, researchers might look at specific issues (i.e., topicality, justification, etc.) as they are affected by listening behaviors. Four tables of data are included. (Contains 24 references.) (RS)

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CRITICAL LISTENING DIFFERENCES DURING INTERCOLLEGIATE DEBATE CONSTRUCTIVE AND REBUTTAL SPEECHES

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The purpose of this research project was to determine differences in the use of critical listening in constructive and rebuttal speeches during intercollegiate debate tournaments. Lack of literature linking the two topics justified this research. Literature concerning listening hierarchies and debate critics specific behaviors was reviewed. A self-developed survey instrument was given to subjects (N = 18) preceding a randomly assigned round at the 15th National Junior Division Debate Tournament. Following completion of the instrument they were returned for later data analysis using the t-test and correlation methods. Critics were found to make key decisions, evaluate faulty reasoning and accept or reject arguments more in rebuttals than in constructive speeches. Several of the survey questions yielded significant differences, but many other findings supported retaining the null hypothesis. Specific conclusions of the study, like the impact on this finding will have on future paradigm development, were discussed.

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CRITICAL LISTENING DIFFERENCES DURING INTERCOLLEGIATE DEBATE CONSTRUCTIVE AND REBUTTAL SPEECHES

In personal interactions listening is an essential component. The nature of the communication process has necessitated the need to study not only the sender but the receiver of the message. Debate, a specialized communication activity, must be included when the acts of the sender and receiver are studied. The purpose of this research project was to determine differences in the use of critical listening in constructive and rebuttal speeches during an intercollegiate debate.

Several justifications exist for the study of critical listening differences in constructive and rebuttal speeches. First, research in the area of listening during debate rounds might help create interest in the area of a cognitive information processor paradigm in debate. The field of academic debate has lacked clear focus in terms of the listening effort by the critic. Research could help determine the critics role in the debate round.

Second, justification can also be found in that no prior research has studied critical listening differences between constructive and rebuttal speeches. Some unrelated data comparing the two speeches from a content analysis perspective has been collected, but no relevance was found to critical listening.

Third, listening needed to be studied in applied settings, like the debate environment. Research in such pragmatic fields helps to further the validity of current listening literature. Study of debate critics' specialized listening behavior ultimately can advance our understanding of the relational model of communication.

Finally, listening literature that focuses on cognitive sender-receivers could provide a new perspective on argumentation and debate theory. Tradition has suggested that debate uses the linear one-way persuasion oriented model of communication. This antiquated model of debate will likely be impacted when the role of the critic is more clearly understood.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

While conducting the literature review much information was found on both processes, listening and debate. Little information, however, was found supporting the link between debate and listening. The listening review has been broken into two categories, listening as behavior and categories of listening.

Listening as Behavior

Wolvin and Coakley (1988) have contended that people have conscious control of their memory and cognitive processes. Spearitt (1962) indicated, "...listening is a kind of human behavior in itself, separate from reading, from memory and from other intellectual behaviors..." (cited in Wolvin & Coakley, 1988, p. 55). Friedman (1986) has further indicated that listening is an internal cognitive process. He contended listening is learnable and practicable which supports the idea that listening is behavior.

Many authors have indicated that listening is more than aural stimulation (Friedman, 1986; Hamilton & Kleiner, 1987; Harris, 1989; Wolff, Marsnik, Tacey, & Nichols, 1983; Wolvin & Coakley,

1988). Friedman (1986) suggested that listening consists of much more that hearing, it requires processing by the brain. Wolvin and Coakley (1988) inferred that individuals make inward plans regarding the response to a particular message. They have further indicated that listening is a combination of hearing and psychological arousal dependent on a message. Banville (1978) wrote that listeners have a choice of attending to messages or being inattentive. The author continued by saying that the ability is a skill.

Best (1986) indicated that individuals experience life through verbal interaction, and mental processes are based on the experience. Language, in his opinion, plays an important role in structuring mental events.

Finally, authors supported the idea that listening is highly controllable (Harris, 1989; Nichols, 1987; Wolff et al., 1983; Wolvin & Coakley, 1988). Wolvin and Coakley (1988) suggested that listeners shift attention and can attend to specific stimuli. Harris (1989) has further supported this idea by indicating that all listeners can take advantage of effective or power listening. Nichols (1987) stated that effective listeners must fight distraction or redirect their concentration. The literature seemed to suggest that listening is a highly controllable learned behavior.

Categories of Listening

In the literature search of listening, taxonomies of listening behaviors were found. Three sources, Wolvin and Coakley (1988),

Friedman (1986), and Wolff et al. (1983) have provided basic levels or types of listening.

Wolvin and Coakley (1988). These authors indicated five basic levels of listening. They arranged these types of listening in a hierarchical structure with discriminative listening at the base. The next level which they included was comprehensive listening. Comprehensive listening, along with the substructure of discriminative listening, forms the basis for three advanced listening types. Two of these types, therapeutic and appreciative listening, were not directly relevant to this research. The fifth type, critical listening was dependent on comprehensive listening because the information must be attended to and understood before evaluative judgments can be rendered.

Friedman (1986). This author explained that listening processes fall on a bipolar continuum. At one end of the continuum listeners were identified as attentive and objective. Their goal was to accept the message without subjective interference. At the midpoint, the listener sought to understand the message. At this stage listeners attempted to organize, prioritize information, and create interrelations between past and current information. Finally, at the far end of the continuum the listener weighed, evaluated, and challenged the message.

Friedman (1986) further explained the individual's listening act by integrating some of the main purposes for attending to messages. Purposes of listening included listening for content, emotion, or aesthetic reasons. These purposes seemed only tangentially relevant to the discussion of typologies.

Wolff, Marsnik, Tacey, and Nichols (1983). These authors indicated that four kinds of listening exist. At a fundamental level, listeners discriminated. The purpose of discriminative listening was understanding the speaker, adding information to our experience, and organizing ideas. The authors' second type of listening was to evaluate. When listeners act responsibly to a message that attempts to change attitudes, beliefs or actions then evaluative listening has occurred. The final two types of listening, appreciative and theraputic, were again only slightly related to this research.

Synthesis of listening types. Combining levels that are alike produced three consistent stages that are relevant to this work. The Wolvin and Coakley (1988) model provided the best explanation of types of listening. At the basic level was listening for discrimination. Friedman's (1986) level of attention corresponded to this. Comprehensive listening, the next level, correlated with Friedman's (1986) stage of understanding and the Wolff et al. (1983) discriminative level. The final type, critical listening, corresponded to Friedman's (1986) evaluation level and Wolff et al. (1983) evaluation stage.

At the critical level of listening, as cited above, evaluative processes occur. Like other types of communication, debate requires an evaluative processing by the critic (Church & Wilbanks, 1986). This link established the importance of researching the relationship between the two subjects.

Debate Critic as Listener

The role of the critic in a debate round has been the topic of 15 years of research (Rowland, 1986). This discussion has produced a select number of paradigms by which judges render decisions (Rowland & Deatherage, 1988). Implicit within most of these paradigms was the idea that the critic is unbiased and disallows personal feelings when rendering the decision (Pfau, Thomas, & Ulrich, 1987).

Pfau et al. (1987) have contended that critics must make decisions based on the round at hand. Many authors inferred that the critic should be an unbiased judge throughout the debate process (Church & Wilbanks, 1986; Faules, Rieke, & Rhodes, 1976; Freeley, 1990; Patterson & Zarefsky, 1983; Pfau et al., 1987; Ulrich, 1983). Ulrich (1983) has suggested that fair decision-making creates a greater climate for educational growth. The idea that the reliability of a decision is based on the unbiased nature of the critic has been upheld (Patterson & Zarefsky, 1983; Pfau et al., 1987). Faules et al. (1976) and Patterson and Zarefsky (1983) have indicated that the critics should base their decision on that which is entered into the round. They further suggested that judges should not impose blatant 'a priori' judgments about the topic or debaters' performances. Implicit within these works was the belief that the critic in debate rounds should be unbiased in an effort to avoid unfair advantage to either team.

Debate Critic as Decision Maker

Church and Wilbanks (1986) considered the role of the critic

as decision maker. They wrote that the critic should be a pedagogic evaluator, arbitrator, or mediator. Each of these views established the idea that a critic's decision was to be based on a specific intercollegiate debate round. Pfau et al. (1987) continued this line of analysis by suggesting that the critic ultimately decides the argument of the specific round. Ehninger and Brockriede (1978) claimed that debaters do not appeal to the other team, rather, they deliberately try to influence the decision of the critic. Theoretically, in the past, critics have withheld evaluation until the round is complete (Pfau et al., 1987). The above literature has suggested that a critic's responsibility is to be unbiased as a critical listener and make decisions regarding the specific round. This responsibility has necessitated the study of the process of how judges critically listen during a round to determine if differences exist at different points in the debate.

Research Question (1) Do debate critics critically listen?

Debate Format and Its Relevance to Listening

The essential format of a debate is centered around the two types of speeches debaters present. The constuctive is a speech designed to posit prima facie arguments for or against a resolution (Freeley, 1990). The basic purpose of the rebuttal period is to refute the opponents' claim (Freeley, 1990; Pfau, Thomas, & Ulrich, 1987).

The purpose of the two basic types of speeches has an impact on the listener critic. A critic may listen to constructives

simply to understand the debate rather than to critique them and attempt to make a decision. Relatedly, a critic may listen to rebuttals to make the decision and to understand positions. It seems very reasonable to suggest that critics may be closer to making decisions in the rebuttal period since it is closer to the end of the debate. Critical listening seems to be inherent within making decisions, so the closer a critic is to making a decision, the more likely they would be to listen critically.

Research Question (2): Is there a difference in critical listening in debate constructive and rebuttal speeches?

METHODOLOGY

Subjects

Subjects were chosen from the judging pool at the 15th National Junior Division Debate Tournament held at Johnson County Community College beginning on March 16, 1990. The population was an accidental sampling. Traditionally, this tournament has drawn 40 to 60 debate teams. Thirty instruments were distributed to critics at the tournament. Eighteen completed surveys (approximately 60%) were returned to the collection point for analysis.

Apparatus

A cover letter and questionnaire were developed by the author. Necessary information regarding purpose, confidentiality, uses and

return of the survey were provided in the cover letter. The questionnaire was designed to test differences in critical listening in rebuttal and constructive speeches. Other listening instruments have been developed (Rubin & Roberts, 1987), but none had direct application to the debate forum.

The instrument contained three sections. The first section asked for basic and specific demographic information like age, sex, number of rounds judged, number of years judged, paradigm, and collegiate affiliation. The second section asked for dichotomized responses (between constructive and rebuttal speeches) about specific critical listening behaviors. There were 12 questions in this section. The final section was comprised of eight questions requiring responses on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. These questions were related to critical listening.

A small section was available for respondents to complete if they wished to receive a copy of the completed study. No debriefing was necessary, given the lack of manipulation of the respondents.

Procedure

The cover letter and instrument were dispersed by tournament personnel at the tournament. This dispersement took place immediately preceding the sixth round. This round was randomly picked by tournament personnel. The survey was dispersed to judges in both the National Debate Tournament (NDT) and Cross Examination Debate Association (CEDA) divisions. The instrument was dispersed as critics picked up their judging ballots for the sixth round.

Instructions were given not to complete the instrument until the round was completed. The respondent was expected to fully complete the instrument including demographics and only voluntarily complete the disclosure of results. The survey was returned with the critics ballot to the judges table for collection and analysis of the data.

Data analysis. After data were collected, the instrument was analyzed. The section on demographics was converted to descriptive statistics including means, ranges, and frequency distributions. Section 2 data were converted to descriptive statistics and later analyzed using a *t*-test (two-tailed) procedure. Comparisons were made between variables on all questions and overall. Section 3 data included a score for questions 13 through 20 which were used for correlational purposes with Section 2 data.

RESULTS

Upon conclusion of data collection of the pilot, analysis of the data was undertaken. The survey was so structured that measures of central tendencies and some parametric tests of variance could be performed. Reporting of the results will parallel the questionnaire structure. Section 1 results detailed demographic data. Section 2 and Section 3 results reported what the instrument found regarding specific listening behaviors occurring in the debate rounds.

Section 1: Demographic Information

The questionnaire asked seven questions regarding basic demographic data about the respondents. From the sample, (N = 18) it was reported that 12 males and 5 females responded (one missing score). The range in age for the sample was from 22 to 44 years (R = 21). The third question dealt with years of judging at debate tournaments. The range in years was computed for judging CEDA (R = 9 years), and for judging NDT (R = 15 years). Only one person reported judging American Debate Association (ADA) style debate. That subject judged one year of ADA.

It was impossible for respondents to appropriately answer Question 4. Unclear directions resulted in ambiguity about the span covered concerning the number of rounds judged by the critic. Some subjects reported the number of rounds judged for this year, while others reported number of rounds judged for their career. Lack of clarity resulted in inconsistent answers. The question, therefore, was disregarded.

The fifth question dealt with educational level of the respondents. As shown in Table 1, over 55% of the subjects had attained beyond the B.A./B.S. level.

Table 1

Education Level

Educational Level	Number of Respondents	Percentage
B.A./B.S.	7	38.8
M.A./M.S.	9	50.0
Ph.D.	1	5.6
J.D.	0	
Missing data	1	5.6

Question 6 dealt with subjects affiliation with an educational institution. Most respondents were affiliated with a major university as has been documented in Table 2.

Table 2

College Level Affiliation

College Level	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Community College	1	5.6
College	3	16.6
University	12	66.6
Military Academy	1	5.6

Question 7 dealt with perceived paradigm orientation of the subject (Table 3). Among the most popular paradigms were tabula rosa, policymaking, and critics of argument. These responses made up 55% of the total sample.

Table 3

Subjects Ascribing to Specific Paradigms

Paradigm	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Skills	1	5.6
Stock Issues	1	5.6
Hypothesis Testing	1	5.6
Tabula Rosa	5	27.7
Policymaking	2	11.1
Other	5	27.7
Critic of Argument	3	
Solid Argument	1	
No paradigm	1	
Missing data	3	16.7

Section 2: Critical Listening Activities

Section 2 was the first section of qualitative data looking at differences in critical listening during debate constructive and rebuttal speeches. This section consisted of 12 questions asking for bipolar percentages between the two types of speeches. Overall

across all questions the computed *t* was 1.99 with a $p < .07$ ($df = 17$). All *t*-tests were computed as two-tailed statistics.

Table 4

Significant *t* Scores

Question synopsis	Computed *t* value
Q6: Makes key decisions	-2.90***
Q7: Evaluation of reasoning	-1.93*
Q10: Accept or reject arguments	-2.53**
Q11: Evaluate issues	-1.99*

*** ($p < .01$)

** ($p < .05$)

* ($p < .10$)

Section 3: Critical Listening Attitudes

Section 3 was the final section of data collected. It consisted of eight questions with a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Questions 15, 17, and 18 were reversed (reflecting the opposite of R (1)), therefore, scores were adjusted to reflect the accurate levels. Averages of these questions supported the concept of evaluative listening occuring in debates R (1). After scoring, analysis produced a cumulative score on all seven questions ($x = 17.00$). Data analysis between the cumulative scores of Questions 13 through 20 were compared against

other scores. A high Section 3 score would hypothetically correlate with a high rebuttal score if R (2) were true.

Comparison Between Sections 1 and 2

Significant differences between constructive and rebuttal scores were discovered for tabula rosa ($t = -5.95$, $p < .009$), policymakers ($t = -18.00$, $p < .035$), and other ($t = -4.68$, $p < .043$). This data supported R (2) that differences in critical listening exist.

Comparison Between Sections 2 and 3

No significant correlation ($r = .3918$) was found between the total rebuttal score and Section 3 scores. Question 6, however, significantly correlated with the Section 3 score providing support for R (2).

Comparison Between Sections 1 and 3

A positive significant correlation between rebuttal scores and Section 3 was recorded ($r = 1.00$, $p < .012$). This result also supported R (2).

DISCUSSION

This section will detail specific conclusions that may be drawn from this research. In addition, limitations of this research will be discussed. Finally, a short section will discuss specific implications for future research on this topic.

Specific Conclusions

Rejection of the research question should not negate the significant effects found during this research. Several questions reflected significant differences. The data reflected that significantly more key decisions were made regarding issues in rebuttals; more evaluation of faulty reasoning occurs in rebuttals; and acceptance and rejections of arguments occurs more frequently in rebuttals than in constructives. Finally, a question restating the research question recorded a significant difference in support of the R (2). Although the difference was only marginally significant, some difference between constructive and rebuttal listening behavior was recorded.

This research impacts the development of paradigms in the debate field. It should be noted that marginally different procedures occur in rebuttal speeches than in constructive speeches. While many paradigms address the favorability of certain issues, none specify the style of listening of the critic during different periods of the debate. Most established paradigms consist of only the perceptual filter critics put on to avoid bias. These paradigms fall short of looking at the entire sphere of paradigmatic development, from perceiving to processing. Many stop at the perceiving level when this research indicates that paradigm development must look farther inward. A reported significant difference in constructive score and rebuttal score, as well as an effect across all 20 questions explain the lack of uniformity of the tabula rosa judge's behaviors. The data indicted tabula rosa judges behave differently in rebuttals than in constructives.

As noted in the Review of Literature, encoding (perception) and storage (processing) are two distinct stages (Best, 1986). This theory seems to create an inconsistency in light of the finding of the tabula rosa critic's behavioral differences. Current research looks only at the perception model, leaving the processing portion unstudied. Paradigm development should achieve its purpose of categorizing critics behaviors, not just the perceptual filter.

More empirical research could help to develop the theory involved in the activity to the normally accepted scientific level. Broad generalizations on the effectiveness of debating styles are fine, but questions cannot really be definitively answered unless empirical, unbiased study occurs. Debate as an art may be well served by broad generalizations, but debate as a science can be best developed by empirical proof.

Limitations of this Research

The greatest limitation to the generalizability of this study was the inadequate sample size. Further research should be based on samplings four to five times larger and cross-sectioned across the U.S.

A second limitation to this research was a lack of demographic distinction between NDT and CEDA. Procedural errors compound problems. A section of demographic data could easily remedy this problem so meaningful inferences based on divisions could be made.

A third limitation of this research dealt with the instrument used. The listening survey should be adjusted and specific

questions needing clarification should be written more clearly. Questions for which no effect could be found should be rewritten. In addition, the method of scoring Section 2 should be revised for ease of completion for the subjects. Section 3 questions should be rewritten so as to either support or reject a test hypothesis.

Implications for Future Research

The first implication for future study should be a delineation between perception and processing in debate paradigms. As noted in specific conclusions, equating the two entities produces problems. Future study must look at these two elements in combination to produce a paradigm that explains both. Second, researchers might look at specific issues (i.e., topicality, justification, procedurals) as they are affected by listening behaviors. More specifically, experimenters should look at 'a priori' issues and determine if these issues are, in fact, 'a priori'. Study of this type would certainly yield pragmatic benefits to debaters. Finally, research could focus on the development of judges. It seems plausible to believe that novice judges process information differently than experienced critics. Research could address this issue through statistical comparisons.

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